

quotations from the Bible and Dr Martin. He is even found wielding his flail to add zest to his arguments. The self-consciousness which we have seen rising in the previous century overflows in coarse satire and invective against the priests, and in spite of its vulgarity it has a distinctly theological tone. The common man has arrived at the conclusion that he and not the priest or the hierarchy constitutes the true Church, and Luther has undoubtedly contributed to nurture this conviction. His conception of the Church as the priesthood of believers, as the sum-total of Christ's followers, of the spiritual equality of Christians, has become a popular conception. And these popular theologians might quote Luther's own words in support of the belief in their own infallibility against pope or priest. Had he not inveighed against the ignorance of the clergy, from the pope downwards, of the things of Holy Writ? Had he not laid stress on the fact that the knowledge of divine things comes from above, is inspired by the Holy Ghost? "The pope, the emperor, the universities, can make doctors of letters, medicine, laws, the sentences/' he cried in his address to the nobility, "but of this be certain, no one can make a doctor of the Holy Scriptures except the Holy Ghost from heaven. As Christ saith, 'You must all be taught of God.' Now the Holy Spirit asks not whether one is young or old, lay or cleric, monk or secular, virgin or wife, yea, He spoke of old through an ass against the prophet who rode on it." Such a deliverance went straight to the heart of the common man, and the common man is accordingly found confuting the parson by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit with increasing boldness. Even Sickingen is heard in the "Neukarsthans" repeating Luther for the edification of the rustic. "We are all the Church, and none more than another." Consequently we must all put our hands to the work of sweeping away the bishops and the priests, and making them disgorge their ill-gotten gear. Down with the false Church is the practical conclusion of the new theology, as expounded by the people in the beer-house and the market-place. The prevalence of a spirit of unrest which discusses, quarrels, drinks itself furious over the beer-pot is ominous even to the most casual observer. It is in truth not new, but it is intensified by the shock of tradition and